

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF  
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 412.—VOL. VIII. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1891.

PRICE 1½d.

## MODERN CREDULITY.

In spite of improved education and the diffusion of knowledge through an ever extending printing-press, there is an amount of simplicity among us that may be described as perennial in its greenness. This is best seen in the twofold forms of superstition, and credulity with respect to the pretensions of charlatans and impostors of every description. There are few minds, even in these scientific days, which are wholly free from superstition. It will generally be found that every man has some pet superstition of his own, however he may laugh at those of his friends. The old belief in apparitions seems only to have taken a new departure in the modern form of spiritualism.

To turn back after once setting out, spill salt, walk under a ladder, sit down thirteen\*at dinner, are still considered unlucky omens. Such superstitious fancies are widespread and die hard. They have a powerful hold on the minds not only of the ignorant of all nations, but of those whose education and experience might be expected to relieve them of all such notions. In Yorkshire, to break a looking-glass is still believed to entail seven years of trouble. In Cornwall, no miner whistles underground; while in many places, pixies, fairies, and brownies are yet regarded as existent beings.

According to feminine fancies, it brings luck to separate men when you meet several together, but quite the reverse to walk between two women on the pavement. To dream of ivy is still considered very favourable, and indicates good weather should you undertake a voyage. Good fortune is ensured if you sneeze on a Saturday; but we must beware of marriage on that day, Wednesday being considered the luckiest. The last day of December is a favourite wedding day in some places. A bride should avoid wearing green colours, as being emblematical of evil. In western counties, Sunday is regarded as an especially lucky day for births. In Devonshire you mustn't wash clothes on New-year's

day—and so on through the whole catalogue of cautions.

On Ascension day, Lord Penrhyn's extensive Welsh quarries are closed, because an idea prevails among the quarrymen that if they work on this holiday some fatal accident will occur. Good-Friday buns are sometimes kept through the year for good-luck. In the north of England, women still wear round their necks blue woollen threads till they wean their children, for the purpose of warding off fevers. It is not so long since a woman, arrested for theft, when searched at the main Bridewell, was found to be wearing a horseshoe 'with nails complete'—for luck, which on that occasion seems to have deserted her. From the pocket of a burglar, searched at Bow Street, was taken a lump of coal, which, the police explained to the astonished magistrates, is usually carried by these midnight prowlers as a sort of talisman to ensure their safety, just as many persons still believe in the efficacy of certain gems. It was noticed that a number of Russian officers in the last war with Turkey wore turquoise rings as 'a means of protection against a violent death.'

Faith in the life-saving virtues of a caul is still prevalent. Rather recently, a case occurred, however, tending to explode this idea. At the inquest on the body of a man found drowned in the Thames, it transpired that the deceased used to boast that he would never be drowned, as he had been born with a caul. In a certain neighbourhood of the same river, night-poachers have a great fear of 'being pelted with human bones.' There is a hole there in which are said to lie the remains of scores of people who were murdered by highwaymen, and thrown in enclosed in weighted sacks. Poachers declare that they have fibulas hurled at their heads if they venture in that district.

Sailors are not the only class who associate the harmless necessary cat with dire portents. Some actors have implicit belief in pussy as an augur of good or evil. The success of that laughter-provoking piece, *The Private Secretary*, is said to

have only been really assured after a black cat chanced to put in an appearance at one of the rehearsals. In fact, no business or profession seems to be entirely free from being influenced by some sort of fetic. Gamblers are notoriously superstitious, and profess to foresee revelations of luck in a great variety of odd ways, but especially in dreams. Their belief in the significance of numbers is marvellous.

In Florence, the dread of the number thirteen is so great that it is absent from many streets, the numbers skipping from twelve and a half to fourteen. In Naples, the date on an old tombstone, a flock of birds, or the number of shadows cast by the moonlight through the iron bars of a gate, send away scores of wretched noodles to invest their last few coins in lottery tickets, in the full assurance that winning numbers have been revealed to them. Similarly, the French are not much wiser in this respect. A son-in-law is confident of winning half a million francs if he can only secure a ticket the last two figures of which shall represent the age of his wife's mother. Another man bases his hopes of gain on the coincidence of numbers with the respective ages of himself, his wife, and three children. Human folly is the same in all countries; and were the State to permit lotteries here, it is certain that the same heathen reliance on just such Mumbo Jumbo would be manifested.

Then, consider the importance of colours with regard to one's hair and complexion as shown in the custom of 'first-footing' every new year. Imagine the villain of the play with fair locks, eyebrows, or beard! Yet the great Napoleon is said never to have trusted a general who had light hair or moustaches. One of the richest men in America is reported to confide in clerks and others in proportion to the darkness of their complexions. The power of 'overlooking'—the magic influence of the 'evil-eye,' and other uncanny attributes, are to this day thoroughly believed in by the Irish peasantry.

In certain parts of Scotland, the people entertain a great horror of the mere mention of swine. Not very long ago, in Inverness, the small clay effigy of some obnoxious person, as used in witchcraft, was produced in court in evidence against some modern wizard. Witnesses testified to the deaths of cattle and illness of peasants through this revival of the black art.

Lately, in the Thames police court, it came out that a woman who had lost a shawl tried to discover the thief by the ordeal of 'the Bible and the key,' a test which 'never failed.' Before invited witnesses, she laid a Bible on the table, and placed a key, to which a string was attached, between its leaves. She held the projecting part of the key, pronounced several neighbours' names, and repeated some doggerel invocation, till at mention of the guilty name the key 'twisted itself out of her hand and fell on the floor.' In the same manner she averred that the name of

the pawnbroker was obtained with whom her shawl had been pledged.

After such revelations, can we wonder that prophetic calendars find thousands of annual purchasers, or need we be surprised that the law frequently fails to protect silly dupes from the wily snares of fortune-tellers?

To consider further evidences of modern credulity, what thinks the reader of chemists in our times being applied to for mystical remedies, as if the days of necromancy were not over? A young woman who was crossed in love wrote to a London chemist for a love potion, which she believed would bring back the roving affections of her fickle swain. The chemist was requested to 'mix a good strong one, as it was for a farmer who was considerably over six feet high, and broad in proportion.' This was not the first of such curious applications he had to refuse. In Somerset, a dairyman whose cows showed a decrease in their yield of milk concluded that he was 'overlooked,' and betook himself to a 'wiseman,' to whom he paid a guinea down, and agreed to keep him at the dairy at the pay of one pound a day and maintenance till the spell was exorcised.

There are striking examples to prove how easy it would be to make a rapid fortune by pretensions to some sort of uncanny powers, did not wise legislation place certain little obstacles in the way of such enterprises. Feminine curiosity with respect to gypsy fortune-telling is well known. But one expects a farmer in these days to have better sense than to proceed to a gypsy camp, as did one lately, for the purpose of getting his 'planet ruled.' It was the old story of a fool and his money soon parted. The fees demanded from time to time were wrapped up in a handkerchief, and some 'dragon's blood' in a dried state grated on it. He was lured on with promises of shortly becoming the possessor of some property, and was shown a tumbler in which was some liquid, and on looking into it he saw what appeared to be some houses floating therein. At the gypsy's request, he threw the contents of the glass over his left shoulder into the fire. After parting with over one hundred pounds, he found the gypsy camp suddenly abandoned, and took his story to the nearest police office for advice and consolation.

Since commencing this article, a curious case has occurred which bears on our subject. A youth was taken suddenly ill, and the parents, instead of sending for medical assistance, applied to a 'sonnambulistic woman,' who mixed some patent potion of her own, which was administered to the patient with the result that he died in horrible agony the same night. At Salisbury, another woman got herself into trouble through setting up as a 'divinity' and professing to read the destiny of a female dupe 'through a piece of thick glass,' for several pecuniary considerations. The foolish applicant became at last so much under the influence of this crafty 'sorceress,' that her mind grew affected.

But a greater adept than she at the mystery business now claims our attention, Methratt, the Great Seer of England, Astrologer, Grandmaster of the Mysteries, &c. An examination by

the police of the letters and documents in his possession proved that the 'prophet' had been doing an extensive and lucrative business. His fees for talismanic advice varied from sevenpence for 'seven years future' to fifty pounds for the 'elixir-of-life secrets.' His correspondence revealed an amount of credulity among the public enough to dishearten the most philanthropic optimist. Unhappy married people would be pleased to be foretold of the early deaths of their uncongenial partners. One gentleman wished to know how long his mother would live, from whom he had great expectations; while a love-sick maiden sent a remittance in order to be told how she could obtain the affections of a certain young man. 'Would the astrologer control the planets so as to draw her and her beloved together, as they lived fifty miles apart?' The talismanic charms were in great demand, and must have been very profitable, considering that a sheet of crown paper would cut up into about eight pounds' worth of the said prophetic emblems.

With such examples of modern credulity in free and enlightened England, it is not so surprising to hear that recently in Russia a peasant was relieved of all his money by the simple expedient of three 'venerable-looking men, dressed in clerical fashion,' calmly informing him that they were three of the apostles. 'We have given you wealth, but you have omitted to exercise charity.' At these words, the trembling victim fell on his knees, begged for mercy, and gave up five hundred silver roubles—all the money he had in the house.

Some humorist suggested as the best allegory of Faith—a bald-headed man investing in a bottle of hair restorer. The public credulity with regard to new patent panaceas is positively touching.

Advertisements offering absurd remedies for any defects of nature meet with instant success. It is only the other day that an amusing illustration of this form of modern gullibility was seen in France. With the feeling that there is nothing so perilous for popularity as obesity, an actress found promise of relief in a doctor who had introduced 'massage' into his practice. He offered to reduce Mademoiselle to sylph-like proportions. She underwent the shampooing process two hundred and thirty-five times, the protracted energy of the medical man being only equalled by the sublime faith and patience of the actress. But alas! in the end she was no thinner, and dismissed him, after paying six hundred francs.

Specimens of the pitfalls always yawning for the unwary through the medium of advertising swindles would fill volumes as they at present fill many newspapers. One example in conclusion will suffice. As the result of a wager between some French journalists that human credulity had no limit, the following announcement was published: 'I Promise Nothing; I Engage to Perform Nothing. But send one franc fifty centimes in postage stamps. Perhaps there is a little surprise in store for you. Who knows? Address, "F. D." Post-office.' The impudence and apparent candour of this cool appeal to the public met with every success. Stamps rained in for several days, so that the winner of the wager was able to hand over a substantial sum to a local charity, after which he told the story in the

newspaper, so that the dupes might know what had become of their money. How true is the saying, 'People love to be taken in,' for in such cases experience teaches nothing.

## A SOLDIER AND A GENTLEMAN.\*

### CHAPTER X.—'THE BEST-LAID SCHEMES OF MICE AND MEN'—

FERRERS' feeling, however, speedily underwent another fluctuation. All the party met at breakfast; but Dolly had neither word nor look for Ferrers: her regard was wholly given to Lord De-brett. Ferrers was hurt, and a little jealous, not understanding that a woman has eyes and sense in the back of her head, and, while appearing engrossed with one, is truly observing and comprehending the whole behaviour of another. He conversed with Drew and Drumly; but he scarce knew what he said, for his eyes and his thoughts were given to Dolly.

When breakfast was over he felt he could endure it no longer: he *must* know how he stood. He followed Dolly from the room and caught up with her as she was crossing the hall.

'Miss Dawlish,' he said.

She turned and looked at him as if she scarcely knew him, and he felt chilled and daunted.

'Won't you come out into the garden for a little?' said he.

'I was just going,' she coldly answered.

He got her hat and his own from the hat-stand, and together they went out.

'I was in the garden soon after six this morning,' said he casually.

'Why did you get up so early?' she asked, as with indifference, while she paused to pluck a rose, which she found she could not accomplish without the aid of his knife. 'Had you a bad conscience?'

'Yes,' he answered; 'a very bad conscience.'

'Why?' she asked, still without looking at him.

'For one reason,' said he, 'because I failed to keep an appointment last night with'—'the dearest girl in the world,' he was going to say—'a young lady,' he really said.

'And why did you do it?' she demanded, at length looking at him. 'Are you not ashamed of yourself?'

'No; not ashamed,' said he: 'sorry—sorry because I couldn't help it.'

'Couldn't help it?' she echoed, turning with a look of frank astonishment. 'I really believe it was that you didn't care a bit to come. You thought it was bold in me to ask you, and you wanted to make me feel it was. You have been very unkind!'

'You misunderstand me altogether,' said he, almost beside himself with her evident distress. 'I am not unkind: you do not know how kind I could be—if I might. And no one could think anything you did was bold; only frank and beautiful.'

'Why, then,' she asked more quietly, 'did you not come?'

'Because,' he repeated, 'I couldn't. I was on my way to the Picture Gallery, when Aunt

Dawlish came along. I did not wish her to see me, so I slipped into a dark room till she should pass. She didn't pass; she came in and sat down to read. I was behind a window-curtain, and I got through the window into the garden. Then I saw that by the time I had made a fuss to get in at the hall-door it would be too late to find you.'

'I waited a long while,' said she, 'till I was ashamed. And then a horrid idiotic laugh rang through the Gallery, and I was afraid, and ran away.'

'A laugh?' exclaimed Ferrers. 'Was there any one there?'

'No; and I never heard that the Gallery was haunted. Did you?'

'No,' he answered. 'But how sorry, how very sorry I am that I was the cause of your trouble and fright.'

Indeed, as he looked at her and wondered if that beautiful and delicate creature really cared for him, knowing he was not her cousin, and was not ashamed thus simply to confess it, he was wildly elated, and the next moment, as he thought of his own unworthiness, he felt humbled and chastened. And still, as he looked at her, a doubt invaded him, too, of Sir William's truthfulness, and a suspicion that it was impossible Dolly should guess he was other than William Dawlish. If she did, could she be so frank and unconstrained with him?

Meanwhile, Sir William had appeared. He sauntered down towards them, dipping his nose here and there to sniff at a flower, and when he was up with them he slipped his hand into Ferrers' arm. 'One moment,' said he, and drew him aside. 'You asked me last night,' he went on in a low voice, 'where the Picture Gallery is: you wanted, I think you said, to show Mrs Drew the pictures?'

'I did say so,' answered Ferrers.

'Well, if you come with me now, I'll show you.'

Ferrers turned and begged Dolly to excuse his leaving her.

'Where are you going?' she asked quite simply.

And quite simply he answered, 'To the Picture Gallery;' while Sir William first frowned, and then smiled somewhat wryly.

'Do you think,' said Sir William to Ferrers, in a low voice, when they had set off together, 'that it is necessary or wise to be so much alone with Miss Dawlish?'

'Am I really with her too much?' asked Ferrers.

'Well, on your own confession of this morning,' said Sir William, 'her exclusive company is dangerous; and there is such a thing as leading one's self into temptation.'

'I suppose there is,' said Ferrers. 'I'll try to avoid it.'

'Don't avoid her too much,' said the other, 'and don't seek her out too pointedly; try to find a happy mean.'

'I'll try,' said Ferrers.

And then silence fell between them, and Ferrers seemed interested only in noting the doors and the turnings on the way to the Picture Gallery. It was a long low room, with dark oak floor, and with a low-browed, curtained door at either end.

It was lighted in orthodox fashion by slanting windows in the roof, which were shaded by blinds that had doubtless once been white, but that were now stained and dingy. The pictures were mostly faded portraits, with devices in arms and armour between, and Ferrers regarded them with indifference as Sir William led him round and pointed out this and that person and expatiated on their private and public history. They had not been long thus occupied when the door opened, and in came Dolly with Mrs Drew.

'Mrs Drew,' said Dolly, addressing Ferrers, 'heard you were here, and she thought she would like to go round the Gallery with you. She expects you, since you are an artist, to show her which are the best pictures.'

'I don't know much about portrait-painting, though,' said he, 'nor care much.'

'That doesn't matter,' said Dolly, and straightway began to act as cicerone herself. 'I want to show you, Mrs Drew, one particular portrait, that I admire very much—this one down here.' She led the stout and smiling Mrs Drew down the room by the hand, and drew her up in front of the portrait of a cavalier of King Charles's days. 'Isn't it beautiful?' she demanded.

'Very,' said Mrs Drew, marching nearer for a close perusal. 'The lace about the neck and wrists is wonderful!'

'Oh, that's not what I mean,' said Dolly. 'And to get the effect you must keep farther back.'

'A curious and valuable frame, too, I should think,' said Mrs Drew, as she was withdrawn to a proper position.

'Look at it from here,' said Dolly: 'the face, the expression, and the attitude. Whom do they remind you of?'

'Law! Bless me! Yes!' exclaimed Mrs Drew, considering face, expression, and attitude through her glasses. 'Who is it?'

'Don't you see?' said Dolly with a touch of impatience. Then in a lower tone: 'One of us here.'

'You don't mean yourself, my dear?' timidly queried Mrs Drew. 'But I'm not good at guessing riddles.'

Dolly gave Mrs Drew up, and at once surrendered her secret. 'Cousin Dawlish,' said she.

'To be sure!' exclaimed Mrs Drew aloud. 'It is indeed remarkably like Mr Dawlish.—Don't you think so, Sir William?'

'Er—yes,' said Sir William, considering the portrait again. 'I have observed it. There is a considerable likeness, especially in that cavalier way of wearing the moustache.'

'And the lofty look,' said Mrs Drew.

'The nose in the portrait, though,' pursued Sir William, 'is higher and finer.'

'I wonder if there really is a likeness?' said Ferrers, scarce knowing what to say in his embarrassment, or where to look in his bewilderment.

'He was a great soldier,' said Dolly; while Sir William turned to look at her. He manifestly thought there might be something to beware of in Dolly.

'It is very strange,' said Ferrers to himself. 'If Dolly really and truly knows that I am not "Cousin Dawlish," how can she keep up the



pretence that I am so easily and naturally? And especially, why does she keep it up with me?'

Yes; why did she not let him know that she understood the position? Was it because she, like himself, had her feelings so far engaged that she shrank from precipitating an explanation which might end their intercourse entirely, or at least strip it of its curious charm of half-disguise? He hugged that possibility warm to his heart; but yet—yet—while he feared an explanation, he felt it must come, and he must urge it, urge it at the first opportunity.

As they left the Gallery, Dolly reminded Ferrers of his promise to teach her something of the art of painting, and Sir William jocularly proposed that they should all go sketching with pencils, crayons, paints, or what not ('Make quite a sketching match of it,' said he), and in the evening put the sketches to the vote of the company as to which was best of any given scene. When they left the Gallery he carried his proposal round. It was well received; for there was little to occupy the guests—there was no shooting or fishing, and it was too hot to ride—and this was thought a fresh and amusing pastime. While the members of the party were seeking out sketching materials, most being content with pencils and sheets of paper, a large wagonette was being got ready to carry them to a favourite sketching-ground.

'Isn't this abominable?' said Dolly aside to Ferrers when they met with their serious and workman-like canvases and paint-boxes.

'It is,' said Ferrers.

Lord Debreitt, who had a soldier's rude eye for a practical joke, appeared furnished with a smooth piece of board and a large carpenter's pencil. 'I think,' said he, 'this is about my size;' and even Dolly was compelled to laugh.

So they set out, carrying luncheon with them; and all—Dolly included, in spite of her preliminary disgust—had a merry day till the sun began to decline, and they returned to Dawlish Place in ample time to dress for an early dinner.

In similar wise did the next day pass—with a picnicking expedition in the morning and lawn-tennis in the early evening—and the next. On the day thereafter Drew had to pay a flying visit to London: the bank, he declared, could not continue its operations wanting both its managers for a whole week; but he was scarcely missed, and Sir William still exerted himself to manœuvre the party and its amusements and occupations. Ferrers let himself be moved this way and that with the others; but he felt somehow that Sir William's management was at work to keep him apart from Dolly, and he thought he understood the reason.

'This is Thursday,' said she on that day, aside to him, 'and we all go back on Saturday.'

'Yes,' said Ferrers. 'I hope we shall be alone this afternoon: I must have a word with you—please.'

But that hope, too, was frustrated: Drummy insisted on carrying him off to see a new reaping-machine at work some miles off. In the drawing-room, after dinner, there was as little opportunity of private conference between him and Dolly as ever, and she after a while in despair departed to her room. Then, as was usual at that time of

night, the men went to the billiard-room, and Ferrers went among them. It was duller even there than usual, for Debreitt had gone to town. So, as on the first night, he soon left the billiard-room, being sad and restless, and with his hands in his pockets, marched off with the intention of going to bed. But in the corridor he remembered his first night's adventure, and he thought, 'Why not go to the Picture Gallery on the off-chance of meeting Dolly?' He set off down the corridor; but he was turned back, as on the first night, by the vision of a candle borne aloft by a woman, and that woman Aunt Dawlish! As on the first night, he retreated before her, and, as then, withdrew into the dark room close at hand, with the thought of going right out, as before, into the garden. When he got behind the curtain, however, he found that the shutters of the window were closed! He was fairly trapped now! He must wait till Aunt Dawlish chose to release him!

But, on peeping through the curtain, he became interested in Aunt Dawlish's behaviour. She had left the door open, and had seated herself at the table with her candle and without a book. She sat with her hands in her lap, and she frequently sighed and shook her head. What grief oppressed her, he wondered, while he almost feared to breathe and longed to cough. The minutes passed in slow silence, and still she sat waiting, with her eyes on the open door. Perhaps a quarter of an hour had passed—though to Ferrers it appeared at least an hour—when a step sounded in the corridor, and Miss Dawlish sat up. The step sounded nearer and nearer, and at length Sir William's figure was seen in the doorway.

'What, in Heaven's name!' he said, 'are you sitting there for, Louisa?'

'I want to talk to you, William,' she answered, unclasping her hands. 'Come in and sit down.'

Sir William came in and shut the door, but he did not sit down.

'This dreadful, risky business you're engaged on, William,' said Aunt Dawlish—'is there no other way?'

'Can you suggest another way?'

'No, William, I can't,' said she.

'Then you'd better let my way have its chance;' and he turned to go. 'Especially,' he added, 'since it is almost come to its end.'

'But, William, just listen. I cannot, cannot see how this man's appearing in Will's place is going to help your purpose. How is it going to end?'

'You are very dull and frightened, Louisa,' said Sir William, sitting down. 'I have never denied there are risks about it; but what are they to the risks on the other side? This is the 26th; and if I cannot pay off the mortgage, or give good guarantee of payment by-and-by, Boughton will foreclose on the 31st.'

'So soon as that?' she exclaimed.

'So soon as that,' said he. 'And Dawlish Place and Dawlish estate will be lost; and I shall be ruined so completely that I shall not even be able to pay you your allowance, Louisa!'

'Oh, dear me! Is it so bad as that?' And Aunt Dawlish wrung her hands.

'I cannot pay off the mortgage, as you know;

and the only chance I see of a good guarantee is that this marriage between Will and Dolly shall be agreed upon at once, and proper settlements drawn up.'

(Ferrers in his retirement felt a swift pang of loss and resentment.)

'I know that, William.'

'And you know, too, Louisa,' continued Sir William, growing fiercer and louder as he proceeded, 'that those two old fools, Dolly's trustees, would never agree to her marriage with Will as they knew him some years ago, or even as he is now.'

"Even as he is now!" Just so, William. And do you mean to keep up this young man's imposture till Will is well enough to take his own place?

(Ferrers winced at the word 'imposture'.)

'No, I don't; though the doctors say Will should be well enough to appear all right within a month. I mean to keep this man only till the marriage is agreed upon between me and these confounded trustees, and till a settlement is drawn up. And that must come off to-morrow, or on Saturday: that's what Drew has gone to town about to-day. You see how the old fools—especially that baboon Drunly—are infatuated about the big, healthy brute, and they'll agree quite promptly. The blind old idiots! As if a Dawlish ever looked, or ever could look, like that!'

'The young man is very handsome and clever, William,' said Miss Dawlish.

'Ah,' snapped Sir William (and Ferrers imagined the grin on his face), 'you're like the rest of the women! A good-looking face and a big strong body—and you fall down and worship the man.'

'Just so, William,' retorted his sister. 'That's the danger.'

'What's the danger?'

'You seem not to have considered what Dolly might think in all this. I'm afraid that Dolly is seriously smitten with the man.'

'Oh, pooh! Stuff and nonsense! Dolly is taken with him because she believes him her cousin. But she has the pride of the Dawlishes about her. Once she knows that he is only a rough common trooper, rubbed up a little with knowing people better than himself, she'll be disgusted with herself for having thought anything of him.'

'I wish she may. But she's a romantic girl, and to know he's a poor man may only make her more interested in him. I wish you understood women better, William.'

'I wish I did,' said Sir William. 'But Dolly—you're mistaken in Dolly. She's a sensible girl; she has her father's business faculty, and she knows what's due to her. Besides, she has our interest at heart, and she's attracted to this man, as I have said, because she thinks him her cousin, and she was fond of her cousin when they were together as boy and girl.'

'And I kept her fond of him, William, by talking always about him. That's why I'm afraid now of this man's influence.'

'That'll be all right, Louisa. I'll tell her the whole thing, when the business has been settled with these trustees. I'll appeal to her proper feelings to save the house and our name. She'll

meet Will again when he is quite himself, and we'll get the marriage over before she has time to think, and without these cursed trustees seeing Will at all, except perhaps on the wedding morning in a dark church.'

'I wish it may turn out as easily as you say,' sighed Miss Dawlish.

'Well, now let's go to bed,' said Sir William.

So Miss Dawlish rose with her candle and went out, and Sir William followed her.

### THE OLD IMPERIAL YARD MEASURE.

THE discovery, in the month of July last, in the Journal Office of the House of Commons, of the old Imperial Standard Yard and other measures, has given prominence to the fact that one of the least known, and probably the most curious, of all the duties of the Clerk of the House of Commons is that of safeguarding the weights and measures, which formed the subject of inquiry by several Committees of the House of Commons, and by a Royal Commission during the later half of the last, and the first quarter of the present, century. This duty was first imposed upon the Clerk of the House by an order of the Commons 'that the boxes containing the standards . . . be locked up by the Clerk of this House and kept by him.' This order, according to the Commons' Journal, was made on the 2d of June 1758, and was renewed on the 12th of April 1759, and the 21st of May 1760, and has never been rescinded. In the Act 5 Geo. IV. c. 74, declaring 'the standards in the custody of the Clerk of the House of Commons' to be 'the only original and genuine standards from which all other Imperial weights and measures are to be derived,' no provision was made for removing the standards out of the custody of the Clerk of the House; and they have accordingly remained in the possession of the holders of that office since the date of the first order of the House before mentioned.

In 1834, when the Houses of Parliament were destroyed by fire, some of the standards—notably the standard troy pound—were lost; while those that were recovered from the ruins were deposited in the Journal Office, where they have remained for over half a century unnoticed. Neither the Speaker nor Mr Palgrave, the present Clerk of the House, was aware of their existence; but the question of the periodical inspection of the standards by the Speaker having arisen, attention was drawn to the old standards, which were found amongst some lumber by Messrs Shelvey and Davie, of the Journal Office, during the removal of the contents of that office to the new wing on the site of the old Law Courts; and they have lately been the subject of much curious examination and speculation. Amongst other gentlemen who have recently examined the old standards, and displayed much interest in their history, may be mentioned Mr Peel, the Speaker; and Mr Edward Ponsonby, his secretary; Mr Chaney, the Superintendent of Weights and Measures; Mr Bull, the Clerk of the Journals; and Mr Palgrave, who has since had them removed from the Journal Office to his library, where they will in future be exhibited amongst

the other curios and relics of the old House of Commons.

But besides these gentlemen; the history of the yard standards, of which there were four discovered in the Journal Office, will prove to many of considerable interest. The oldest standard on record was that of the Saxon kings, which was kept at Winchester, and which King Edgar decreed, 'with the consent of his wives or council,' should be the standard. Another old standard, indeed the oldest now existing, dates from the reign of Henry VII., but this has long been disused; and that which, till the year 1824, was considered as the legal standard was a brass rod of the breadth and thickness of half an inch, placed in the Exchequer in the time of Elizabeth. Mr H. W. Chisholm, the late Warden of the Standards, in his interesting work on Weighing and Measuring, says, in reference to these standards, that 'the existing imperial yard is so nearly identical in length that it exceeds them by a little more than a hundredth part of an inch, a difference frequently found in footrules now commonly used. There can also be but little doubt that our imperial yard is substantially the same length as the old Saxon yard. We have no further direct trace to its origin. But the English yard is so nearly the same length as double the natural cubit of the Egyptians and Hebrews; and the English foot is so nearly identical with the ancient foot, two-thirds of this cubit, that the origin of these two English units of length may not improbably be traced to these two earliest standard units. We know that the double cubit was used in ancient times as a measure of length. An old Egyptian double royal cubit, found in the ruins of Karnac, may be seen in the British Museum. We know also that a measure very nearly equal to two natural cubits was used by the Romans under the name of *ulna*, or ell. The *ulna* is mentioned by Pliny, when describing the measurement of the girth of a tree, as half the length of the extended arms of a man. It may thus be fairly assumed that the measure of the double natural cubit, or three feet, under the name of ell or yard, came into use in old times as a very convenient measuring unit, and found its way into England as the standard unit of length.'

But although the difference in length between the oldest standards and the present imperial yard was so small as to be unworthy of notice in measuring a yard of ribbon or calico, the standard of Elizabeth appears, from the following extract from the Report on the new standard scale of the Royal Astronomical Society, to have been incapable of affording any definite or correct measure for great geodetical operations: 'I have had an opportunity of seeing this curious instrument, of which it is impossible at the present day to speak too much in derision or contempt. A common kitchen poker, filed at the ends in the rudest manner by the most bungling workman, would make as good a standard. It has been broken asunder, and the two pieces been dovetailed together, but so badly, that the joint is nearly as loose as that of a pair of tongs, and yet till within the last ten years, to the disgrace of this country, copies of this measure have been circulated all over Europe and America, with

a parchment document accompanying them, certifying that they are true copies of the English standard.'

No reliance could therefore be placed on such a measure for any scientific purpose whatever; but it was not until the year 1742 that some Fellows of the Royal Society and members of the Academy of Sciences at Paris 'proposed to have accurate standards of the measures and weights of both nations made and carefully examined, in order that means might be provided of comparing the results of scientific experiments in England and France.'

A Committee of inquiry was appointed; and it is probably due to the researches of this Committee that Bird's standard of 1760, now in the library of the Clerk of the House of Commons, was adopted as the imperial standard, and declared to be 'the unit or only standard measure of extension.' In the course of their inquiry other standards were discovered besides the legal standard in the Exchequer, 'which were considered of good if not equal authority.' At Guildhall they found two standards of long measure, which were only two beds or matrices, one of a yard, and the other of an ell, cut out of the sides of a substantial brass bar, like that at the Exchequer. Another, preserved in the Tower of London, was a solid brass rod, about seventenths of an inch square, and forty-one inches long; on one side of which was the measure of a yard, divided into inches. Another, belonging to the Clockmakers' Company, delivered to that corporation by indenture from the Exchequer in 1671, was a brass rod of eight sides, nearly half an inch thick, on which the length of the yard was expressed by the distance between two upright pins, or small checks, filed away to the proper quantity.

The Committee selected the standard in the Tower, as being the best defined, and consequently the best adapted to their purpose; and Mr George Graham—a celebrated clockmaker—at their desire, laid off from it, with great care, the length of the yard on two brass rods, which were then sent to the Academy of Sciences at Paris, who in like manner set off thereon the measure of the Paris half-toise. One of these was kept at Paris; the other was returned to the Royal Society. From the copy made by Mr George Graham for the Royal Society, Bird made his standard of 1758; and from this the standard of 1760 was copied, the latter standard being described, in the Report of the House of Commons Committee—upon which Report the Act passed in June 1824 is based—as 'best agreeing with the most extensive comparisons which have been hitherto executed by various observers and circulated throughout Europe, and in particular with the scale employed by Sir George Shuckburgh.'

In 1758, or sixteen years after the Royal Society had initiated the inquiry, a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the original standards of weights and measures in the kingdom. As may be seen from the Journals of the House of Commons, the Committee entered very fully into the subject, and in their Report recommended that 'a rod, which at their order had been made by Mr Bird from that of the Royal Society, and marked



"Standard Yard, 1758," should be declared the legal standard of all measures of length.' This rod—which is one of those now in the custody of the Clerk of the House—consists of a solid brass bar, 101 inch square and 39·06 inches long. At about an inch and a half from each end, a gold pin or stud is inserted, in which pins, at the distance of thirty-six inches, are two points intended to designate the length of the yard. As may be seen from a reference to the Journals, it was proposed that this rod should be kept in safe custody in the Exchequer Office; but it was ordered for the time being to remain in the care of the Clerk of the House.

In the following year, another Committee was formed on the subject. It concurred in the recommendations of the former Committee that Bird's standard yard should be the only unit of lineal measure; and at the same time recommended that a copy of it should be made for security against accidents, and deposited in some public office. Accordingly, a second standard was constructed by Bird in 1760 similar to the former, of which, indeed, it was intended to be a copy. The last standard of 1760 was declared by the Act of 1824 to be the legal standard of the kingdom.

But although two Committees of the House of Commons had thus sat and reported upon the subject, no legislative enactment was passed, and the standard measures remained in the custody of the Clerk of the House. In 1814 another Committee was appointed, and made an abortive Report; and five years later, in 1819, a Commission was nominated by the Prince Regent. They reported in favour of the standard which had been made by Bird in 1760; and this Report having been approved by a Committee of the Commons, an Act was passed in June 1824, which for the first time defined the unit of measure, and in the following terms: 'The straight line between the centres of the two points in the gold studs in the brass rod, now in the custody of the Clerk of the House of Commons, whereon the words and figures "Standard Yard, 1760" are engraved, shall be, and the same is hereby declared to be the original and genuine standard of that measure of length or lineal extension called a yard; and that the same straight line or distance between the centres of the said two points in the said gold studs in the said brass rod, the brass being at the temperature of sixty-two degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer, shall be and is hereby denominated the imperial standard yard, and shall be and is hereby declared to be the unit or only standard measure of extension.'

No mention was made as to the person who should have the custody of the standard yard, and it therefore remained in the care of the Clerk of the House; but provision was made in the Act, in case of the loss, destruction, or defacement of the standard, for the making, under the directions of the Lord of the Treasury, a new standard yard, bearing the proportion to a pendulum vibrating seconds of mean time in the latitude of London, in a vacuum, and at the level of the sea, as 36 inches to 39·1393 inches.

The new standard excited much hostile criticism. It was urged that the standard adopted was not an original measure, but a reproduced

copy of that in the Tower; and when it was compared with a new standard scale made for the Royal Astronomical Society, 'it was found to be utterly impossible to ascertain the centres of the points in the gold studs within distances perfectly appreciable by the methods of observation now practised.' Mr Baily, in his Report above cited, says: 'The mean diameter of each of the holes was nearly one hundredth of an inch, and they by no means presented anything like a circular shape. In fact, not only did different persons differ in their estimate of the centres, but the same persons also differed at different times, according to the degree or direction of the light that impinged on the sides of the holes.' And he adds: 'How the legislature of the present day, when the art of making mathematical instruments has arrived at such a state of perfection, could have sanctioned the adoption of such an imperfect and undefinable measure as this for a standard, must always be a matter of astonishment.'

Mr Chisholm says that 'the comparing apparatus in use at that period consisted of a beam compass with two fine measuring points, which could be adjusted to the dots on the standard measures under comparison. But the result of numerous comparisons of this kind made from time to time, previously to the destruction of the standard in 1834, had been to leave the edges of the holes indented and irregularly worn away, so that the original centre was very difficult to ascertain. Mr Baily, who had made some comparisons with this standard yard in the early part of the year 1834, describes the holes as appearing like the miniature crater of a volcano.'

The new standard had, however, but a brief existence, being destroyed in the fire which consumed the old Houses of Parliament in 1834. Chisholm says: 'The two standard bars of 1758 and 1760 were both found amongst the ruins of the Houses of Parliament; but they were too much injured to indicate the measure of a yard which had been marked upon them; but how they came to be stored in the Journal Office nobody appears to know. By their present appearance the bars seem to have sustained little injury, except that the left-hand gold stud has disappeared from either standard; but whether the injury was caused by the action of the flames or by accident or design is not known. When, however, it is remembered that it was upon the points on the gold studs that their accuracy and precision depended, there can be no doubt as to their value for scientific purposes being hopelessly destroyed.'

After its destruction, a new Commission was appointed in 1843 to reconstruct it; and researches for this purpose, in conformity with the Act, were begun by Mr Francis Baily, and, after his decease in 1844, were continued by the Rev. R. Sheepshanks till his death, the work being completed by Mr G. B. Airy, Astronomer-royal, afterwards Sir G. B. Airy, K.C.B. It was found that the restoration of the old standard could not be effected in the manner provided by the Act with any degree of certainty, as Bird's standard had never been directly compared with the pendulum; and it was also discovered that the relation between them of 36 to 39·1393

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assigned in the Act was incorrect, 'on account of the neglect of certain precautions in the determination of the length of the pendulum which subsequent experiments have shown to be indispensable.' The late Warden of the Standards says, in his work above mentioned, that 'in order to select the most perfect specimen for the new standard of length, forty line standard yards were constructed of Baily's metal, and one of these was finally selected as the imperial standard, not only from its representing, with the greatest precision, the assumed length of the lost standard yard, but also from the clearness of its defining lines, and from its general good workmanship. The details of the numerous comparisons of all these new standard measures, including the determination of the rates of expansion of the several bars, may be found in the Astronomer-royal's account, *Philosophical Trans.* 1857, Part 3.' The present standard yard is in the Standards Office; but in case of injury or loss, four copies of it are deposited in other places, one being the House of Commons, where the copy is walled up; but no duty is assigned to the Speaker or the Clerk of the House in connection with it; section 35 of the Weights and Measures Act, 1878, which provides for the care and restoration of the Parliamentary copies of the Imperial Standards, specially exempting this copy from periodical inspection.

## ON THE MARSHES OF DEVA.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

'ABRAHAM RICHIE, Farmer.—What a singular title for a canoe!' I reflected as I laid my fowling-piece across the thwarts and leisurely began to fill my briar, scanning meanwhile the letters painted on the stern—'and what a monster of a gun!'

I had seen nothing larger hitherto than an eightbore fowling-piece; and the sight of the six-foot barrel with a muzzle as wide as a half-pint tumbler filled me with astonishment. It was fitted to a stock of like proportions, and of the shape of an ordinary shoulder-gun, and rested in a groove in the bows, reaching almost from end to end of the little craft. Goliath of Gath when upon the war-path would have shouldered just such another weapon, if it had then been invented; but I came to the conclusion that the gun was far too cumbersome to be used to advantage by the average human being.

I found afterwards that for every duck or plover slain by my gun, after hours of patient watching in the dykes of the marsh, Abraham Richie's leviathan would strike down scores with ease. I had the pleasure of trying it in after-days; and on one of these occasions, after the recoil had, as usual, driven the little flat-bottomed vessel several feet backwards, I paddled forward to find no fewer than thirteen widgeon lying dead upon the tide.—But I am anticipating.

The marshes of the Dee estuary are of considerable extent, and off Burton, near Chester, they

cover almost the whole of the three miles of river-bed that divides the Flintshire and Cheshire coasts at this point. They are the night-haunt of the numerous wildfowl that frequent the river; and often during the season had I tramped over from Flint to take up my watch with the wild-fowlers in the hollows which the tides have excavated in the marsh. A fisherman had pointed out a spot where the Deep—a channel by which shipping passes to and from Chester and Connah's Quay—could be safely forded at low water; and equipped with a pair of tall boots, I found that I could reach the marshes on the Cheshire side with but little inconvenience. I had heard many stories of Abraham's wholesale slaughter of wildfowl, while upon my 'fighting' expeditions. How Abraham the elder, who now lay in Burton churchyard, had established himself upon the farm now occupied by 'Aba' the younger by fringing the stalls of the Liverpool poulterers with wild-birds; and how the younger strove faithfully to follow in the father's footsteps by engaging in midnight excursions in a little white canoe, whereby the milkcart which rattled out of the farmyard in the early hours of the morning frequently carried an additional burden, and Aba's banking account grew apace.

When I discovered the canoe, I was returning from a bootless expedition, which had used up the greater portion of a Saturday afternoon; but this I did not mind. I was fond of solitude, and the change from the stuffy bank in which I spent my working hours to the prairie-like marshes overrun by the fresh breezes of the Irish Sea, was grateful indeed.

As I concluded my inspection, and was turning to go home, I noticed that the numerous sheep which had been widely scattered over the marsh were closing into large flocks, while a black sheep-dog, which in the distance looked exactly like a flying crow, was darting with great rapidity in the direction of some distant stragglers. At the same moment I became aware of a female figure standing upon the grass-grown embankment, which was pushed out over the marshes in a fruitless and expensive attempt to win some of the broad acres for cultivation. She was watching the motions of the dog, and my route lay directly past the spot where she was standing. I noticed that her appearance was attractive; but as I drew nearer, I felt that such a term would be a very inadequate description of this enchanting nymph of the marshes.

Her sweet girlish face was lighted by wonderful gray eyes, shaded now by a little white hand, as she looked away westward to where the lag-guards were returning in a huddled despondent little group, while the dog, with tail erect, moved right and left behind his charges, after the manner of a vessel tacking against a head-wind. There was an air of refinement about her not usually found in shepherdesses in real life; and as the rays of the departing god of day streamed up the river and lighted on her graceful figure, they bathed it in an unearthly radiance.

I had many times noticed that the sheep upon the marsh were branded 'A. R.' and on the strength of this fact, I boldly doffed my 'Shanter' and asked 'Miss Richie' if she knew when it would be high-water, and further, whether she

thought I might safely cross to Flint. Our conversation scarcely lasted a moment, however, for directly afterwards a broad-shouldered homespun individual, who was appealed to as father, and who had directed more than one sharp glance at me as he approached, gave me the desired information. When, after more conversation and more searching glances, Abraham invited me to go up to the house and drink a dish of tea with him, I did not refuse.

I found that the other members of the household consisted of Mrs Richie, a very busy lady of matronly aspect; a red-armed servant girl, with lilac-printed gown and wooden pattens, that clacked loudly as she walked; a younger abigail, with red cheeks and beady black eyes; and a middle-aged and melancholy-looking cowman, who glanced surlily up at us as we passed through the yard that led to the side-door of the substantial farmhouse.

The name of the last-mentioned individual was, I afterwards learned, Yethert; and this strange appellation served both as a Christian name and a surname. Why 'Yethert,' or who gave him that name, no one appeared to know. He had strayed into Abraham's service from the harvest-field, nearly seven years previous to my acquaintance with the family, and no one had deemed it necessary to make any very pressing inquiry as to his antecedents. I mentioned his strange taciturnity to Abraham once, and he replied carelessly that his cowman was a 'queer ould sort;' but he was as 'honest as they make them;' adding, with a laugh, 'and he's a real Cheshireman. If you shook him up, you'd hear the beans and buttermilk rattle—and that's a sure sign of a Cheshireman all the world over.'

Tea was served in the well-furnished sitting-room overlooking the river and the fair landscape beyond; and in the hour which followed, I learned much of the ways and wiles of wild-fowl; and I found, too, that as an only daughter, Miss Richie had received an education superior to what might have been expected of a young lady in her position. When I left, I carried with me a general invitation to call any time that I was over that way, and a vision that haunted me as I had never been haunted before.

I paid many visits to the marshes after that; but I brought home fewer birds than ever; and my little Welsh landlady, who, on the strength of a long acquaintance, occasionally addressed me in unstudied phraseology, would assume a look of something approaching disgust when she saw me take down the weapon of the chase and begin to fill my belt with cartridges.

'What for do you go out in the night-air, Mr Graham, when you bring nothing back with you but a cold?' she burst out on one occasion. 'But, indeed, you will come back drowned some fine night—mark my words, if you don't. You will, for sure!'

Despite these encouraging predictions, I would sally forth as usual; and later in the evening my breechclorder would be resting in the cosy ingle of the house, whose distant light seemed to beckon me like a ray of hope over the wastes that lay between.

So day followed day until a certain eventful Saturday drew near. The following Monday was to witness sheep-washing upon a grand scale on

the marsh; and as I had expressed a desire to witness what was to me a novel sight, Abraham, with characteristic kindness, invited me to spend the Sunday and Monday under his roof. 'You'll have to come round by rail, though, my lad,' he remarked, 'for the spring tides are on; and it wouldn't be safe to cross by the "Cop" [embankment]. Pity the trains run so awkward, for you can't get here till the afternoon. We'll have the dinner an hour later, though; the young fellow who is coming out from Liverpool won't mind.'

I did not relish the idea of 'a young fellow from Liverpool;' but I accepted the invitation.

It so happened that the Saturday evening was an anniversary that always brings me a train of sad reflections, and this was no exception. I laid down my book and wandered out in the dusk through the streets of the little town, and on, and on, to the river. I sat down under the shadow of the crumbling castle wall and looked out over the river banks. The shore was deserted; but ever and anon the distant report of a gun was borne across the silence of the marshes; and in fancy I could see the wildfowls crouching low in the dykes and eagerly watching the patch of gray sky over their heads, as with finger on trigger they waited for a snap-shot at the swift-winged birds who were sweeping up to the marshes for the night. Others, again, were standing erect in the solitude like sentinels, and with their guns at the 'ready' position, were peering steadfastly into the gathering gloom.

While I thus mused, a slim young moon looked calmly down at her reflection in the deep; and miles away, the familiar lights on the Cheshire side began to flicker into existence. I knew them all. There was the solitary light of Abraham's farmstead, gleaming like a diamond in its dusky setting. A little to the left, another diamond point marked the whereabouts of Denhall; and high on the hill above twinkled the village lights of Ness, where little Emy Lyon—Lord Nelson's Lady Hamilton—was born. A little way down the river, again, the lights of the 'forgotten watering-place,' Parkgate, were strung together like a glittering necklace; and far, far beyond, the lights of Liverpool flashed upon the horizon like a mighty conflagration.

Soon the bells of Flint Church began to ring for evening service, and again my thoughts wandered away to certain graves lying, all peaceful enough, beneath the sound of church bells in the north country. Anon, the peals died away; the 'last bell' struck up a shrill brief warning to lagging worshippers; and in the silence that followed, the whistling cries of the wildfowl could again be heard.

The firing had now ceased; the 'fighting' was over for the night, and the wildfowls would now, I knew, be toiling homewards over the broad stretches of sand. I rose at last, stiff with the long sitting, and was turning away from the beach, when I heard other footsteps grating upon the shingle and gradually approaching me. I paused, and idly watched a human figure grow out of the dim light, fifty yards away. The moon was obscured at the moment; and with some difficulty I made out the form of a man with a broad-brimmed hat and somewhat slouching gait. Presently I saw him stop and stoop low, so as to

bring the outline of my body against the sky. In a moment he hailed me.

'Well, Mester Graham, an' is it yew! Why, I've bin lookin' fur ye all over Flint. All over Flint, that I have; an' here you've bin all the time.'

I recognised the voice at once. It was Yethert, and in another moment that once surly individual stood before me. But what a change had come over the man! The battered felt hat; the patched velveteen coat with capacious pockets; the corduroy breeches, encircled, for some inexplicable reason, with a piece of string under each knee; and the heavy navigator boots, still decorated the square-set figure; but for all these familiar embellishments the man was transformed. The Yethert of the Richie farmstead was black-browed, and so sparing of speech that I never knew him utter a word unless in reply to a direct question; but the Yethert who now addressed me was quick-spoken, eager, and all but brisk in his manner. The Yethert I had known heaved in his gait as if he was firmly attached to the tail of an invisible plough; but Yethert as he walked on the Flint beach was a military-looking person in comparison.

He continued: 'I've bin to yer house, and the Missis didna know wheer ye'd gone. Ye hadna gone after the ducks, she said, fur yer gun was hangin' up wheer ye left it.—But, mester!—he broke in with a peculiar laugh, that sounded strangely there on the lonely shore—'ye can go after the ducks without a gun, canna ye? I know all about it; and again he laughed aloud.

I was more and more astonished. To have met with Yethert in Flint at all was surprising; but to have him discourse in this free-and-easy manner, and above all, to find that he could evoke a laugh, was a most unheard-of thing. I could only conclude that his altered manner was due to sundry visits to the local public-houses; and ignoring his last remark, I asked him what had brought him over to Flint.

'Well,' he replied in a confidential manner, and slightly lowering his voice, 'ye see th' Mester and th' Missis has bin talkin' about ye; and they reckon it's a pity that ye shouldna get over till the Sunday afternoon; and so they tould me to mexan up the cows as quick as I could and walk over and fetch ye.'

'But what about the tide?' I interposed. 'The tide will be running in soon, and we may be caught by it if we attempt to cross.' (I may here remark that in common with many other persons who live in the immediate vicinity of the beach, I never know exactly when it is high-water, or when the tide begins to ebb or flow, excepting when I happen to see it.)

From the window of my study where I am writing these lines I can see the advancing tide streaking the yellow sands with bars of silver. I see it thus day by day, and I know its varying moods as I know the peculiarities of an old friend. I have watched the Storm King a thousand times as he has girded himself in the distant hills and stalked on legs of vapour over the estuary; and yet, if I am asked a few hours afterwards what time the tide will begin to roll in, I am obliged to make the humiliating confession that I do not know.

Yethert laid his hand impressively upon my

shoulder as he made answer: 'Mester, I know every inch a land in the river, and I can get ye to th' Cop afore the tide comes in as easy as winkin'. When ould Yethert does a job,' he added fervently, he does it gradely [properly]; and th' Master and Missis wouldna ha' sent me over to ye if it wasna reet. Besides, Mester, do ye think ould Yethert wants to slip his wind? Nay, nay! Come on afore it's too late.'

Yethert's knowledge of the banks and of the spots first covered by the tide was, I knew, perfect; and after a little hesitation, I returned with him to my apartments, obtained possession of a small travelling bag, and returning to the shore, we waded cautiously over the Deep, and stepped on to the firm sandbank beyond.

No sooner had we reached the opposite side, however, than Yethert's eagerness departed, and his habitual gloom of manner returned. He sauntered along in the old heaving churlish fashion, sometimes labouring by my side, sometimes walking a little in advance, and more often lagging in the rear. Finding that I could no longer draw a word from him, I strode steadily on in the semi-darkness, my eyes ever fixed on a tiny light far ahead, and my mind busy, among other matters, with the mysterious 'young fellow' whom I was to see on the morrow, and of whose personality or relationship to the Richie family I was as yet quite ignorant.

We reached the marsh, and I was soon fully engaged in leaping or eluding the network of dykes and the tiny lakelets that continually barred my progress. Yethert leaped the smaller obstacles with much greater agility than might have been expected from his appearance, and waded through the broader pools, as I had often seen him at Burton, without removing his boots, and with the utmost unconcern. He had fallen behind considerably, and apparently was not over-anxious to get upon even terms with me, for whenever I heard the peculiar sucking noise made by his saturated boots, they always sounded a long way in the rear.

This did not surprise me. My greatest surprise had been the extraordinary affability Yethert had displayed towards me in the earlier portion of the evening, and the unusual eagerness of his manner. I several times fancied that the water in the dykes was rising; but my confidence in Yethert's superior knowledge of the banks and tides was such that I apprehended no danger, and the Cop—a sure refuge from the tides—was beginning to show itself like a dark shadow across the marsh. Separating the Cop from the marsh is a broad shallow stream, which, before it begins to be fed by the tide, is seldom more than two feet deep; and when I thought about the matter at all, my only feeling of uneasiness was, that before we reached it, it might have risen to such a height as to cause us to wade to an inconvenient depth.

The moon hung over the Halkin Mountains at our backs, a woe-begone half circlet of pale gold; but the stars shone out with great brilliance, and the Cop was beginning to define itself more and more clearly against the horizon. I could even faintly distinguish the rude shed on its summit, in which Abraham's shepherd boy occasionally stood sentry over his woolly charges on the plain below; and I was congratulating



myself on my near approach to the comforts of Abraham's well-stocked larder, when I was brought to a sudden stand-still by the appearance of a number of glittering objects on the marsh some distance in front of me, which wavered and flickered about in the most extraordinary manner. I could not make it out, and I walked on again towards the spot. A few strides explained the mystery. On the marsh in front of me was a vivid reflection of the starry canopy above; and as I stood rooted to the spot, with my heart thumping against my ribs, I could hear the measured rhythmic ripple of the advancing plain of water that had intruded itself between me and safety.

### THEATRICAL 'BENEFITS.'

AMONG the many changes that have taken place in theatrical customs and arrangements during the last thirty or forty years, none is more marked than the decline of the old system of allowing the principal performers each season to supplement their salaries by the proceeds of Benefit performances. Actors and actresses of any mark now obtain much higher salaries than in former times, and Benefits are practically restricted to charitable objects. The reform is wholesome and was much needed. The evils of the old system reached a climax in the case of impecunious provincial or travelling companies.

The degrading begging—'canvassing,' Mr Crummles called it—by means of which benefit tickets were disposed of by poor Nicholas Nickleby and his fellow-actors in the famous Crummles' Company will readily recur to the reader's memory. Benefits with them were 'bespeaks,' and were taken at every possible opportunity. The frequency of these calls on the sympathies of theatre-goers led to embarrassments, for when Miss Snelvellicci wished to take a benefit, the difficulty was to find a new excuse. 'She had a bespeak,' said Mr Crummles, 'when her mother-in-law died, and a bespeak when her uncle died; and Mrs Crummles and myself have had bespeaks on the anniversary of the Phenomenon's birthday, and our wedding-day, and occasions of that description; so that, in fact, there's some difficulty in getting a good one.' Accordingly, Nicholas, recognising the difficulty of providing a constant succession of defunct relations or interesting family anniversaries, did his best to help the fair Snelvellicci. At York, it was of old the custom—suppressed by Tate Wilkinson towards the end of the last century—for the actors to solicit patronage for their benefits with a bill of the performance in their hands, which they readily exchanged for the usual fee of half-a-crown. Wilkinson records that at one of his own benefits at Maidstone his gains amounted to two pieces of candle and eighteen-pence in cash.

Actors' benefits owe their origin to King James II., who ordered the first performance of this nature to be given for Mrs Elizabeth Barry. This lady found benefits so profitable, and such an admirable means of augmenting a scanty salary, that the practice soon became general. One of the most famous of these early benefits was that given to the veteran Betterton on April

6, 1709. The house was unusually full of persons of distinction, and the stage itself was crowded with ladies and gentlemen, who paid handsomely for the privilege of occupying this point of vantage. Pit tickets were paid for at the rate of a guinea apiece, a sum equivalent to a considerably higher charge nowadays. The play was *Love for Love*, and Betterton was supported by two famous actresses, Mrs Barry and Mrs Bracegirdle; but the movements of the players must have been greatly impeded by the presence of so large a part of the audience on the stage. In April of the following year, Betterton took another and last benefit, in which he made his final appearance on the stage. For fifty years he had been the leading actor in both comedy and tragedy, and on this last night he won enthusiastic applause as Melantius in *The Maid's Tragedy*. The sham was very quickly followed by real tragedy, for the veteran actor died within forty-eight hours of the end of the play.

The inconvenient and absurd custom of allowing spectators on the stage was finally suppressed many years later by Garrick. The change was resisted at first by the actors, for the high charges made for stage seats had always materially helped to swell their gains on benefit nights. Garrick met this by enlarging the house, and so providing more seats for the audience in front of the curtain. The old system led to many absurd spectacles. Quin, when playing Falstaff for a brother actor's benefit, had literally to force his way to the front of the stage through the crowd of spectators assembled thereon; and Juliet, when supposed to be lying in solitary state in the tomb of the Capulets, lay surrounded by scores of onlookers.

The old custom of allotting certain nights' performances for the benefit of the author of a play, which had been in vogue long before actors' benefits were first instituted, was still maintained. When Rowe's *Jane Shore* was produced in February 1714, the third, sixth, and tenth nights were set apart for the author's benefit; and on the first two of these nights we are told that the boxes and pit were laid together and half a guinea was made the price of admission; on the third night the performance was given 'at common prices.' *Jane Shore* was a great success, and Rowe no doubt obtained no inconsiderable pecuniary gain from his three benefit nights.

Miss Rafter—afterwards famous as Kitty Clive—made her first appearance on the stage at a benefit taken in 1730 by Henry Carey, the author of many once famous farces, and still remembered as the poet of *Sally in our Alley*. The evening's proceedings on this occasion were remarkable, and certainly unusual. They embraced, in addition to the performance of a cantata by Carey, a march in procession of musicians, armed, according to a contemporary chronicle, with all the instruments invented since Tubal Cain, from the Haymarket to Temple Bar, where they were joined by 'authors and printers' devils,' and thence, with the addition of painters at Covent Garden, to Drury Lane.

The first benefit for the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund 'for the relief of those who, from infirmities, shall be obliged to retire from the stage,' was given at Drury Lane in 1761, when Garrick



played Kately in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*. Fifteen years later, on June 10, 1776, Garrick took his farewell of the stage, playing, for the benefit of the same Fund, the part of Don Felix in *The Wonder*.

The benefit performances of the last century were given not only for actors, authors, and charitable institutions, but for a great variety of miscellaneous objects. In 1715 the last performance of the season at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields was given for the benefit of 'Tim Buck, to release him out of prison.' Four years later at the same theatre the play was announced by one Spiller as 'for the benefit of himself and creditors.' One man took a benefit because, he said, 'my friends having expressed a great dislike to my being on the stage, I have resolved upon taking this benefit to enable me to return to my former employment.' The rascal pocketed the proceeds of the performance, and remained on the stage. More praiseworthy than some of these were the occasional nights given in aid of hospitals, church building, sufferers from fire, and other charitable objects. The monument to Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey was erected in 1741 out of the proceeds of benefit performances given at Covent Garden and Drury Lane.

Many remarkable performances for the benefit of individuals have taken place during the present century. A curious medley was given at Drury Lane on June 12, 1820, for the benefit of Edmund Kean. Kean sang songs, accompanying himself at the piano, and gave imitations of Kemble as Hamlet, of Ingleton and Braham, with a song in the manner of each, and of Munden, Lamb's favourite comedian. The versatile actor also danced, and gave an exhibition of fencing. The evening's entertainment was preceded by a prologue that grossly flattered the famous tragedian; it concluded with the lines:

Who can act the Admirable Crichton on the scene?  
The answer's plain, the Admirable Kean.

'Autres temps, autres mœurs;' it is difficult to imagine Mr Irving figuring as the hero of such a 'variety entertainment' as on this occasion served for Edmund Kean's benefit.

Noteworthy performances of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* were given by Dickens and his famous company of amateurs at Liverpool and Manchester in 1847 for the benefit of Leigh Hunt. The company included John Forster, Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon, John Leech, and other celebrities; while Talfourd and Bulwer Lytton supplied addresses eulogistic of Hunt. When Dickens and his company first acted this play in 1845 at Miss Kelly's little theatre in Dean Street, the performance was greatly applauded; but a second representation on the larger stage of the St James's Theatre was not so successful. The audience was very fashionable and distinguished, but withal somewhat cold. Before the play began, Lord Melbourne remarked, not very critically, that it was a dull play; and between the acts his lordship declared in a loud voice from his box: 'I knew this play would be dull; but that it would be so confoundedly dull as this I did not suppose!'

Of late years, benefits have been occasionally given to particular actors or actresses as testi-

monies of the esteem in which they are held by the other members of their profession. The bill of the performance given for the benefit of Charles Mathews at Covent Garden on January 4, 1870, before he started for Australia, contains a remarkable list of names. It includes those of Buckstone, Barry Sullivan, Toole, Brough, Webster, the Bancrofts, H. J. Byron, J. S. Clarke, Mrs Keeley, Mrs Chippendale, Mrs Alfred Mellon, and many other theatrical celebrities.

Some of these latter-day benefits have realised very large sums of money. One given to Lester Wallack at New York in 1888, shortly before his death, produced four thousand five hundred pounds, the whole of which was generously given by the beneficiary to a charitable institution associated with the stage. The famous Compton benefit, given at Drury Lane in March 1877, together with a performance at Manchester, where Compton had long been a favourite actor, realised the imposing total of five thousand pounds. An extraordinary number of well-known performers took part in this Drury Lane benefit. The names of Creswick, H. Wigan, C. Warner, Hare, Kendal, Webster, David James, Farren, Henry Irving, Jefferson, Phelps, Charles Mathews, and of Miss Ellen Terry, Miss Ada Cavendish, Mrs Chippendale, and Mrs Kendal, represent but a few of the dozens of well-known actors and actresses who shared in this tribute to the veteran comedian.

## WILD WILL.

### A WESTERN STORY.

NOR to have seen and known Custer City would, so recently as six years ago, have been looked upon as a serious defect in a Western man's education. Never to have met Wild Will would at once have stamped one as a 'Tenderfoot.'

Wild Will, first. His real name was J. B. Hickock; but this had long been forgotten, and his famous sobriquet stuck to him more closely than his shirt. His reputation as the greatest scout in the West was spread far and wide; but Western scouts, like the majority of mountain guides, do not amount to much. They are great in the personal reminiscence way, and can drink deeply with impunity, or with any one who invites them; but in other respects they are generally of the class described as frauds. Wild Will, however, was one of the few whose deeds overshadow their words. His supreme courage and physical strength had endeared him to the rough miners and cowboys, who regarded him as a hero, and rendered his name a word of terror to every red-man west of the great Missouri.

Custer City lies in the Deadwood region of the famous Black Hills, and is pleasantly situated in an open park, hemmed in on all sides by gradually rising hills, rock-ribbed, and crested with dark towering pines. At the time of which I write the streets were regularly laid out; and the buildings, chiefly constructed of logs or rough boards taken from the hill-side forests, might be

roughly estimated at about one thousand in number. It looked like a promise of good things to come; but the greater attractions of Deadwood nipped it in the bud, and, from a mining town, Custer sank into a centre for supplies.

Life in the wild Black Hills is more real and earnest than is stagnation in the schools and banks of the old country, as many a former 'varsity man, or sometime dapper clerk, has discovered; while its wholesome sternness somewhat compensates for its not infrequent brevity. Even parsons are apt to develop 'clear grit' in the bracing atmosphere of the Hills. A clerical friend of the writer's cheerfully pursues his duty in Lead City, Dakota, notwithstanding that his immediate predecessor was shot dead in the street by a drunken Indian, and that he himself weekly finds 'drink-checks' and cartridges figuring in the collection plate. This last eccentricity is only the way of the boys, who do not hesitate to play practical jokes upon the man for whom they would die, so gentle is he with the victims of the 'accidents' which are constantly occurring in a mining camp.

The god of Custer was Whisky, and his temples in the shape of saloons were in every street. The principal one of these was kept by High-priest Moriarty, an Irishman, red-headed, red-armed, and red-hot. The crowd had assembled at Moriarty's after mining hours in order to drink and see the fun. There was a scuffle in the large bar-room. A slightly-built young lad, of not more than eighteen or twenty years of age, was seen struggling in the vice-like grasp of a muscular, brutal-looking miner of twice his age. It was plainly only a question of minutes when the burly ruffian would crush his youthful opponent. But before the older man could free himself from his delicate-looking but agile antagonist, the youngster got in a nasty blow, drawing streams of blood from his opponent's face. The throng laughed at this. Stung by the sound of mockery, the irritated recipient, quick as lightning, drew a pistol from his belt and levelled it. The lad's fate seemed certain. At this moment some one stepped swiftly through the half-open door, laid his hand upon the brawny desperado's shoulder, and, without apparent effort, sent him reeling to the farther end of the bar.

'Wild Will!' The words ran in whispered admiration round the room. The miners clustered more closely together; the more timid, or, possibly, more prudent, of Moriarty's customers withdrew. There was certain to be some free shooting after what had occurred, and both parties were reputed handy with their shooting-irons.

The new-comer stood some six feet two inches in height, and was exceedingly powerfully built. His face was open and highly intelligent; his flaxen hair fell in long thick ringlets upon his broad shoulders; his eyes, blue and laughing in expression, looked one straight in the face while he spoke; and his thin, closely-compressed lips were partly covered by a heavy blonde moustache. He seemed such a one as women and children would instinctively cling to in the moment of danger. This hero, who appeared strangely out of place in a Western bar-room,

wore a costume which was a curious combination of the attire of a prairie ranger with that of a fashionable dandy. From underneath the skirts of his elaborately embroidered buckskin coat gleamed the butts of a pair of silver-mounted revolvers, which were his inseparable companions.

The bully speedily recovered himself. Staggering to his feet, he darted back towards his assailant, only to recoil with dismay from the dark muzzle of a revolver, and the calm mischievous eye which gleamed coldly and cruelly behind it. 'Drop that shootin' iron at once, sirree.'

The pistol fell with a crash upon the floor.

'Curse you, Will!' growled the fellow, as his hand moved stealthily towards his belt. 'What do you interfere for? 'Tisn't no business o' yours.'

'Hands up, Jack—sharp! or I shoot.'

'Will means business.'

'I say, mate, that lad's in luck.'

'Send I may die, but I wouldn't stand in old Colorado Jack's shoes for nary red cent.'

Such were some of the remarks which the miners addressed one to another.

Clearly Wild Will was a prime favourite in Custer City.

The quarrelsome ruffian, who had been called 'Colorado Jack,' felt this, and knew that he stood practically friendless and alone in the crowd. He shifted uneasily, first on one leg, then on the other, and at length managed to bluster out: 'It isn't the first time, you hound, that you've spiled my game; but it's got to be the last. One of us shall be wiped out, and I don't much care which.'

'Be it so,' said Wild Will, with the faintest possible flush suffusing his fair face.—'You hear him, gentlemen. I accept the challenge.'

'Then we'll settle this little business here and now.'

'No, but you don't!' thundered Moriarty, snatching up a Winchester repeating rifle. 'I'll have no bloodshed in my place.—Go outside, and do what you like; but you shan't bring the Sheriff or the Vigilance here; so I tell you plain, Jack.'

'Hold!' The word rang out like a bugle-note. It was Wild Will who had spoken. He continued, firmly and coldly: 'As I am the challenged person, it is my right to select both place of meeting and weapons. There is no need for further interruption of the evening's amusement.—Colonel Coldey, you will act for me.—Moriarty, I stand drinks round.'

'Hurrah! for Wild Will, the bravest scout, and the dashingest Injin fighter in the hills!'

So the company shouted as they clustered around the bar and prepared to drink at their threatened hero's expense.

This openly evinced partisanship was more than Colorado Jack could endure, so he scowlingly withdrew from those who no longer desired his presence. As the meanest of living things would seem to have some parasite, so it was with him. He was followed by a low-browed, bandy-legged, villainous-looking Mexican, who was known in Custer City by the name of 'Chuck-halter.' The fellow had acquired this name from his having once narrowly escaped hanging for

the unpardonable crime of horse-stealing, at the hands of justly incensed Arizona cowboys.

When the two worthies had got well out of sight of Moriarty's, Jack turned round to his follower, and inquired: 'Well, Chuckhalter, what have you got to say?'

'You should have wiped him out,' answered the Mexican. 'I would have given a hundred onzas to have seen it done.'

'Ah! I remember, mate, you've felt the weight o' the skunk's hand too. 'Tain't a light un.'

The Mexican twisted his features into an ugly grin; but he answered nothing.

'Well, I'm waitin', Chuckhalter. You see, it couldn't be done; or I'd 'a done it, surely. But how's the job to be finished off now? What do you say—shall it be knife or pistols?'

'If you are wise, neither. You are no match for him whom you call Wild Will. I say watch, and wipe him out with a snap-shot as he goes to his diggings.'

'What! and be lynched? The boys 'ud be certain to spot me.—No; not that game, old boy, anyway.'

'Take your own course, my friend; only, don't expect me to bury your carcase.'

'All right; cease your croaking, can't you!'

Perhaps Colorado Jack saw the angry flush mount to his companion's brow; anyway, he proceeded more quietly: 'You go, Chuckhalter, and see that old dunderhead, Coldey, and arrange this affair for me. Tell him that I select bowies, across a handkerchief to-night, in one of Moriarty's rooms.'

The Mexican looked at his companion with a glance equally composed of surprise and admiration, as he replied: 'It shall be done. And I hope you will come safely out of it; that I do, Jack, with all my heart.'

'I don't care much; but I'll take good care that he shan't.—Go now, and remember that I have entrusted my honour into your hands.'

Honour! How easily may the word be degraded!

Meanwhile, Wild Will and his friend Colonel Coldey had been talking together in a low tone. The colonel was a Virginian, and therefore a gentleman. He had seen service, having been severely wounded, under Beauregard, at the battle of Bull Run. Like an old war-horse, he felt his blood quicken at the prospect of a fight.

Wild Will was speaking. He said: 'I scarcely know what to suggest, colonel. You understand these matters as well as I do; only be good enough to consult me before deciding anything, for I should not like to take a mean advantage of even such a coyote as Colorado Jack.'

'Let your mind be easy, my friend,' answered the old soldier; 'your interests will not suffer in my hands.'

Just then the Mexican, Chuckhalter, sheepishly approached and requested an interview with the colonel on behalf of his principal. This was immediately granted, and Wild Will withdrew.

'Capital!' chuckled the warrior cheerily as he listened to the Mexican's proposals. 'Neat, close, and about fair for both men. Your fellow is plucky, too. Dash my wig! I had hardly expected it of him. To meet Will with the bowie. H'm! Rather he than me.'

'Then we may look upon it as settled that they fight it out here to-night?'

'Not so fast. I had nearly forgotten. I must speak to my man first; but there is no doubt he will agree.'

'He must do so,' responded the Mexican, 'or else Jack will publicly cowhide him into dog's-meat.'

'Tush, tush! Don't rave. Jack would not dare to do any such thing. However, just wait half a minute.'

The colonel unceremoniously adjourned the meeting, in order that he might confer with Wild Will.

The principal listened in silence until his second had concluded; then decisively shaking his head, he said: 'No, old friend; it wouldn't do at all; I must refuse.'

The colonel, with a look of surprise, fell back. Had he, after all, over-rated Wild Will's courage?

'Nay; I mean no offence, least of all to you; but hear me. I ask you now, squarely, are Jack's terms fair?'

'They are bold ones. He certainly is no coward,' the colonel responded.

'It is not that. See!' And the famous scout raised himself to his full height as he said: 'I once fought four Indians at once, when only armed with a bowie knife. I am able to hit a dollar with it at thirty feet. There is not a man in the territory whose eye is as quick and hand as sure as mine is. No; I won't meet the fellow so; it would be simply murder.'

'But the terms are of his own choosing.'

'What does that signify? I am the challenged one. If I meet Colorado Jack in deadly strife, it must be on equal terms.'

'I know it, Will—I know it!' So saying, the veteran clasped the scout in his manly arms.

'These, then, my trusty comrade, are the only terms on which I will consent to meet him;' and Will went on to speak earnestly, in a low but animated tone.

'Good. But think, lad, you will be running an awful risk.'

'It cannot be helped. It is about the only fair way that I can think of.'

The Mexican emissary of Colorado Jack was beginning to grow impatient, when his restlessness was checked by the colonel's return.

Colonel Coldey's first words were: 'I have to inform you, sir, that my principal declines your proposition.'

The Mexican sprang excitedly from his chair. 'But he cannot. He is bound'—

'Excuse the interruption,' interjected the old soldier; 'we are the challenged party, and so have the right of choice. Here is our proposal. Let your principal be on the prairie on the southern side of the city in one hour from now. You and I, sir, must be there somewhat earlier. The weapons will be named on the ground.'

'Sir! I really must refuse'—

'Pardon. I think, Mr — Eh! Ahem! our conference is ended; and as I have a pressing engagement, I must request that you will excuse me.' So saying, Colonel Coldey withdrew, leaving Chuckhalter to digest his chagrin as he best could.

The great prairie to the south of Custer City

was infested with prairie-dogs, a kind of marmot whose deep burrows constitute a constant source of danger to cowboys and horsemen generally. These burrows are favourite places of resort for the deadly rattlesnake ('*Crotalus horridus*'), which—so the miners and trappers believe—dwells in peace with its marmot host.

The sun was setting, a great red ball, in the west; the long shadows of the hills lay athwart the prairie, when the seconds met. The two spoke together for a few seconds; and the Mexican laughed convulsively as if at some singular pleasantry. Then they wandered into the thick sagebrush, and were busily engaged poking aimlessly into the holes of the prairie-dogs, when the two men who were intent upon a deed of blood were seen approaching from opposite directions.

The four men met. The principals bowed in silence. The seconds withdrew a little apart, then returned, and the colonel spoke. He said: 'Gentlemen, we need not waste any time. Unless Jack will apologise and withdraw his challenge, we may as well proceed to business. The light is already failing.'

At this, Colorado Jack could not contain himself, but with a saturnine laugh, exclaimed: 'I apologise! Well, by the jumping Jehoshaphat, but that's cool. I only hope Will here won't down on his marrow-bones, the white-livered cur.'

Even the Mexican had the grace to look ashamed at this outburst, and laid his hand upon the arm of his brutal principal. 'Don't let us talk like children,' interposed the scout, 'when we ought to act as men.'

The colonel only ignored the vulgarity, and said: 'These are the terms of this duel. We, as your seconds and guardians of your honour, have mutually agreed upon weapons.—Colorado Jack,' he continued, turning towards the man whom he addressed, 'it is well known to us that you are not Wild Will's equal either with pistol or knife; so, in order to make the chances square, we have decided that you two shall each place your bared arm up to the shoulder in the hole of a prairie-dog, such hole being selected by us as seconds; the one who escapes being bitten by a snake to be the victor.'

'Strike me blind if I do!' yelled Colorado Jack.

Wild Will smiled, and said simply: 'I agree.' 'Gentlemen,' exclaimed the colonel, 'you will do exactly as we have arranged; or—he paused significantly—'I shoot the one who refuses.' He went on: 'You will draw for choice of holes.—Now, Jack, you first. Observe! It is black for the right, white for the left.'

Jack sullenly reached out his hand.

'Ah! you have the black. I wish you luck. Half an hour is the time, gentlemen.'

The participants in this singular duel were then placed in position. Colorado Jack, with white face and trembling limbs, threw himself upon the sword and thrust his arm into the awful orifice. Wild Will, having first lighted a cigar, calmly followed his opponent's example. So the two remained for the space of half an hour.

The two seconds meanwhile looked on, quietly smoking, as only Western men can and do.

At length the allotted time expired. The signal

was given, and Wild Will rose calmly to his feet. Colorado Jack did not stir. When they raised him, he was dead. Yet his arm was uninjured.

'How do you suppose it was, pardner?' inquired a miner the next day, of the Mexican, Chuckhalter. 'They say as how old Jack wasn't bitten by any o' the warmints.'

'I can't tell how it was,' replied the other. Then, lowering his voice: 'Madre de Dios, do you think that there really is a God? Surely there must be, for when that old firebrand soldier was not looking, I tried to do our friend a good turn, and made sure that there was no snake in his hole. But it was of no use, you see, mate; he got wiped out all the same.'

'And Wild Will is the hero of the hour.'

'Yes; but let him watch: Jack has left friends behind who will avenge his death.'

Not long after this, Wild Will visited the new mining camp at Deadwood. He was sitting at a table playing cards, when an assassin came up behind, put a revolver to his head and fired, killing him instantly. A dozen hands flew to as many pistols; but the murderer had gained the door; turning for a moment, he displayed the features of the Mexican, Chuckhalter; then he threw himself upon a fleet horse, and galloping off, was lost in the darkness.

The next day the great scout was buried. Beside the dead man lay his rifle and pistols, which were to be buried along with him. The funeral service was brief but impressive, and at the close of the ceremony, the mourners walked in lowly procession past the pit of death, each one taking a last, long, sad look at the spot where their hero lay buried. When the last had gone, the sextons did their work, and filled in the first grave in Deadwood.

#### D E A D.

Oh weary eyes! that oft did weep,  
Closed now: rest well in dreamless sleep.

Oh tired hands! that did their best,  
Lie still—be folded into rest.

Oh heart! so torn with love and pain,  
Thy troubles ne'er can come again.

Oh busy brain! so full of thought,  
Thy work is ended: all is nought.

Oh feet! that trod life's stony road,  
There's rest for you 'neath grassy sod.

Oh fragile body! sad and worn,  
Rest thee—ah, rest thee from life's storm.

And thou, oh soul! that wing'st thy flight  
From earth's dark prison into light—

Great gain, oh soul! be thine for aye—  
From earth's dark night to endless day.

ROSETTA.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, Limited,  
47 Paternoster Row, LONDON; and EDINBURGH.